

ST. MARY OF NAZARETH /ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI – WEST WICKHAM

27th March 2022: Mothering Sunday

Hazel writes:

Last week at the St Mary's APCM it was agreed that we should sign up to be a church supporting Ukrainian refugees. We will be discussing what this might entail when the St Francis' PCC meets on Tuesday this week. This effort will be co-ordinated with other churches in West Wickham, so that we can show our community to be known as a place where refugees are welcome. Today we will be supporting mothers from Ukraine with a contribution to Baby Basics in each of our services. If you can't make it in person, here's a link to where you can buy something to help a mum in need:

<https://www.forcommongood.co.uk/apps/giftregistry/registry/149941>

Today, we have a Holy Communion service at 8am in St Francis' Church, and Mothering Sunday services at 9.15am in St. Mary's Church and at 10.45am in St Francis' Church.

Hymns at 9.15 a.m. in St. Mary's – All our blessings – Beauty for Brokenness – When I needed a neighbour – Father in heaven, thank you for mothers – All over the world the spirit is moving

Hymns at 10.45 a.m. in St. Francis – All our blessings – Kum ba Yah – You are my sunshine – He's got the whole world in his hands.

Next **Sunday 3rd April**, we will have Holy Communion services at 8am in St Mary's Church, and a Joint Service at 10am in St Francis' Church.

Morning Prayer is held each week in St Francis' Church on Wednesday morning at 9.30am, followed by the church being **open for private prayer** from 10.30-11.30am. It is also held at St Mary's Church on Thursday morning at 9am.

The churches will also be open to **Pray for Ukraine** as follows:

- Tuesday from 6.30-7.30pm in St Francis';
- Thursday from 9.00-10.30am in St Mary's.

Messy Church is on Friday 1st April at 3.45pm in St Mary's Church, with the celebration livestreamed on YouTube at around 4.40pm.

St Francis' is hosting a '**cake and craft**' event on Saturday 2nd April run by St John's and raising funds for the Link to Hope Ukraine Appeal. Link to Hope have volunteers on the ground helping Ukrainian refugees in Romania, Moldova & Bulgaria, as well as Ukraine. Book a workshop here: <https://fb.me/e/6jZILHyGn> or drop in for some tea and cake any time from 2-5pm.

Resources and updates for the week ahead – This week our service will be livestreamed on YouTube from St Mary's at **9.15am** on Sunday. All other files for this week have been combined and posted as a pew sheet which has been sent on paper to those who have told us that they are not on-line. Other worship and resources that you might want to listen to or look at on Sunday:

- The Church of England's national virtual service will be available on their website at www.churchofengland.org.
- The BBC have the following programmes to watch and listen to:
 - Sunday Worship at 8.10am on Radio 4 – On Mothering Sunday with Rev. Dr. Alison Jack of Edinburgh University's School of Divinity.
 - Choral Evensong at 3pm on Radio 3 from the Chapel of Jesus College, Cambridge.
 - On BBC 1: Songs of Praise at 1.15 p.m. - Rev. Kate Bottley celebrates Mothering Sunday with mums at a baby massage class in Derby.

Good Friday for Children: Activities and Worship at St Francis Church Hall from 11am - 12 on Friday 15th April. Parents can attend the service in church or are welcome to stay and join in with their children. Under 4's must be accompanied.

Coffee & Chat is on the first Thursday of each month at 2.30pm on Zoom. Our next date on Thursday 7th April is likely to be the last of these meetings. If you have been part of this group and cannot make the date or would like the log-in details for our last meeting, please let Rowena know (rowena.griff19@btinternet.com or 8777 6112).

Please bring **Foodbank donations** to the Vicarage or St Francis' Church. Currently they require tinned hot and cold meat, tinned potatoes, tinned vegetables, long life fruit juice, tinned fish, chopped tomatoes, rice, custard, rice pudding. They are well stocked with pasta, cereals and baked beans. Please do not bring any fresh food, or baby milk as the foodbank cannot pass this on. You can also donate financially here <https://bromleyborough.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-money>. Thank you for your continuing support.

The funeral of **Cynthia Symes** will take place on Friday 8th April at 11.30 a.m. at St. Marys and be followed by a reception at Club Langley, 2 Hawksbrook Lane, BR3 3SR. Please reply to the family before 31st March on 07954 345092. if you are going to attend this.

We are holding another **High Street foodbank collection** on Saturday 9th April for money and non-perishable food and household goods. If you would like to volunteer

some time at our stall, from 10 am to 3 pm please contact Tim Shingler on 07785 772649 or email tim.shingler@ntlworld.com. The collection takes place on the corner of The High Street and Ravenswood Avenue.

There is a **concert for fuel vouchers** on 9th April in St Francis' at 7.30pm. Bromley Borough Food Bank believe there will be a high demand for these vouchers in April and beyond when prices are due to rise, and we would like to be able to support them in this provision. There will be a bar before the performance and during the interval. The performers are Che, a talented young classical piano duo who play individually and as a four hand, and Trifonics, a string Trio who have played across the UK and on stages around the world. Tickets can be booked via <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/st-francis-of-assisi>

Each year the Bishop of Southwark has a **Lent Call** which raises money to support projects throughout the diocese and in our link dioceses of Zimbabwe and Jerusalem. Details of the projects being supported in 2022 are available here: <https://southwark.anglican.org/news-events/events/lent-call/resources/> there are also hard copies available in each of the church buildings to borrow or read while you are there. There are envelopes available for donations during the next few weeks and the offertories on Easter Sunday will also go towards this appeal.

Two local ladies have set up a **befriending service** called Companions. There are leaflets about this in both of our churches, or if you'd like more information, contact either Andrea (07506 686238) or Maria (07939 120718) or by email at companions22@btinternet.co.

If anyone would like a pedestal at either church in memory of a loved one or to commemorate a special anniversary etc., please contact Merri Womack (8777 8772) for St Mary's (or there is a list to sign in the vestibule at St. Mary's) or Nicky Nightingale (nicholanightingale@hotmail.co.uk or 8916 9855) for St Francis'.

No flowers now until Easter.

Any items for the joint pew sheet to Beryl berylbolton@hotmail.com and items for the websites to brian.griff19@btinternet.com or Gifty office@stmarywestwickham.co.uk.

Collect

God of love,
passionate and strong,
tender and careful:
watch over us and hold
us all the days of our life;
through Jesus Christ our
Lord.

First Reading: 2

Corinthians 1:3-7

³ Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the merciful Father, the God from whom all help comes! ⁴ He helps us in all our troubles, so that we are able to help others who have all kinds of troubles, using the same help that we ourselves have received from God. ⁵ Just as we have a share in Christ's many sufferings, so also through Christ we share in God's great help. ⁶ If we suffer, it is for your help and salvation; if we are helped, then you too are helped and given the strength to endure with patience the same sufferings that we also endure. ⁷ So our hope in

you is never shaken; we know that just as you share in our sufferings, you also share in the help we receive.

Second Reading:

Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

¹³ After the wise men had left, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph and said, "Herod will be looking for the child in order to kill him. So, get up, take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you to leave."

¹⁴ Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and left during the night for Egypt, ¹⁵ where he stayed until Herod died. This was done to make come true what the Lord had said through the prophet, "I called my Son out of Egypt."

¹⁹ After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt ²⁰ and said, "Get up, take the

child and his mother, and go back to the land of Israel, because those who tried to kill the child are dead." ²¹ So Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went back to Israel.

²² But when Joseph heard that Archelaus had succeeded his father Herod as king of Judea, he was afraid to go there. He was given more instructions in a dream, so he went to the province of Galilee ²³ and made his home in a town named Nazareth. And so, what the prophets had said came true: "He will be called a Nazarene."

Post Communion Prayer

Loving God, as a mother feeds her children at the breast, you feed us in this sacrament with the food and drink of eternal life: help us who have tasted your goodness to grow in grace within the household of faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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REFLECTION – Hazel O’Sullivan

I wonder what is the most difficult job that you’ve ever had. For me, it’s definitely being a mother. Don’t get me wrong, I love being a mother, but it’s something that I had no training for, and you just don’t know what is going to come up next. Yes, you can read books on childcare, and you can go to classes, but no-one can tell you what your particular child is going to be like – their personality, their likes and dislikes, their illnesses. And it’s impossible to predict the exact circumstances that you’re going to find yourself in – the friends they’ll make and what other family members will be doing as they grow up (including yourself – I never anticipated when my children were born that I’d now be living in a place called West Wickham where I’d be the vicar!)

And even with a second child, nothing will be the same as it was with the first, so it’s a whole new set of learnings to go through. So, for me, this is the toughest job I’ve had so far – tougher than working on an international systems implementation with people from around the world, tougher than going into different companies to do their audit, tougher than training accountants, tougher than giving career advice, and yes, tougher than being a vicar.

Think of what the experience of motherhood would have been like, then, for Mary in our gospel reading. She is young herself and now has a small child, Jesus, who’s probably just over a year old when the story is set. Mary’s husband, Joseph, tells her that he’s had a dream and that they need to go to Egypt with the child.

What!?!?

Even the detail of the dream seems difficult to understand. Someone with great power nearby wants to kill your son, so God has told your husband to travel to another country over 400 miles away. Your means of transport is a donkey and it’ll probably take about two months to get there. When you get there, you’ll know no-one and won’t speak the same language. No-one could have prepared Mary for this. Yes, she knew her child was special and there were likely to be difficulties in his life, but that was going to be later, wasn’t it? That would be once he’d become an adult ... Mary had anticipated that at least she’d be able to start with a fairly normal life.

Taking care of any child 24/7 is difficult enough, but doing this as a refugee parent, when you don’t have any support around you is very tough. You don’t know where your next food is coming from, you don’t know what kind of welcome you’re going to get at the next place you find yourself in.

But Mary did have the support of Joseph. And she knew that God was with them, protecting them on their way.

Imagine doing all of this without a husband by your side ...

This is what Ukrainian refugees are currently facing. They're mostly women and children. They haven't had any training for this, so how do they make decisions on things such as which direction to travel in and how to safely find food, transport and shelter when they're surrounded by strangers. And all of this whilst having no idea what the future holds for your husband who's had to stay behind.

Many of us have already responded with monetary donations to DEC and other organisations to get resources out to places like Romania, Poland and Moldova where huge numbers of women and children are turning up. Next week we are hosting a cake and craft event in St Francis' church hall on Saturday afternoon, which will raise money for a charity who have people on the ground in these countries and can provide help directly to refugees.

There have also been thousands of people who have signed up with the UK Government to offer a place for Ukrainian refugees to stay. I know that there are some here in West Wickham who have done so. It would be great if we as a church community could give support to these people when they arrive here. It's not really clear what this will be, but it could be something as simple as suggesting and providing what might be in a welcome box of goodies for the host families to give out. Later it might be providing a place where hosts and refugees can gather together to share their experiences, maybe over a meal, or to help with understanding how the system of education or benefits or healthcare works, or giving a guided tour of the area or days out, or suggestions for places to go to. All of these are the kind of support that's envisaged in our reading from 1 Corinthians. When we have troubles, often it's our family or friends who will help us out through being a listening ear, giving a place of safety, helping us to buy something that we need, or simply being there as a companion. Paul is telling the Corinthians that he has experienced this kind of help himself and will give it to others, just as they have probably experienced this kind of help themselves and can give it to others.

How about you? You may be a parent yourself; you may have experienced coming to live in a new place; you may have had to rely on others at some point for food, transport or shelter. I'd love it if all those who have a connection of some sort with a church in West Wickham, even if it's just in looking at our website, or reading a poster,

recognised us as a community that provides this kind of help. We've started already by having the Ukrainian bunting outside St Francis', flying the flag outside St Mary's and opening regularly to pray for those who are caught up in this horrendous situation, which no-one has had training for. Now we need to start preparing ourselves for more practical assistance, so that we are ready when refugees come to West Wickham. It could be another week or two, or maybe longer, as there's an on-going matching process happening, as well as the need to process visa applications, not to mention the time taken to travel here.

If you're a potential host, or you know someone in the West Wickham area who is, please do put them in touch with us for support. And today, we're taking donations for an organisation called Baby Basics, who'll be putting together supplies for new arrivals in the UK: things like toys and pyjamas for children, and toiletries for both mothers and babies.

If you'd like to volunteer your time at this early stage in setting something up, do speak to me. As we develop our response, we'll be asking for specific things and gifts of time, so do keep in touch through all our community links.

Think again now of whatever it is that you've had to do in life that you found particularly challenging. It may have been being a mother, or it may have been something else. Whatever, it was, think of those people and things that helped you, and where it was that they came from ... Now reflect on whether you could be a part of helping others in even more challenging circumstances today. No-one has prepared them for these circumstances with training, but they might find themselves in a place where there's a connection with you, whether that be through a monetary donation that you've made or in time that you've given in setting up our response. I pray that it could be so, and that West Wickham can be known as a place where refugees are welcome.

Prayer Pointers

On Mothering Sunday pray for mothers who are apart from their children; for all motherless and lost children; for all of us whose mothers have died; for a parent or parents of a child who has died and for children without parents; for all who long for children but are unable to have them.

For simple pleasures in the midst of challenge and hardship; for lengthening hours of daylight; for people who lift our burdens, wipe away our tears, share our lives and our dreams and see the best in us.

For the Robes Project and the Greenwich Winter Night Shelter – emergency assistance for the homeless operating in the Woolwich Area and supported by the Bishop of Southwark’s Lent Call.

In a week when a safeguarding investigation into the strip search of Child Q was published, as well as the Government response to the ‘Sewell Report’ on race and ethnic disparities, we pray that incidences such as the appalling treatment of Child Q are not repeated and there is real commitment given to building trust, to promoting fairness, to creating agency, and to achieving inclusivity in all parts of our society.

For the needs in our own communities; for families under pressure; for people struggling with rising bills; for people in debt and distress who have nowhere to turn; for all who need to know today they are loved.

For those struggling with ill health – especially Julie Bailey, Vicky Pearce and Barbara Colpus. For those who will be told this week that they have cancer and for the doctors and surgeons who have to tell them this diagnosis. For the love and support of Macmillan Nurses as they support patients through treatment and beyond.

For the soul of Carole Hubbard, for her husband Malcolm and all her family; for the soul of Robert Davis, for his wife Marian and all his family; and for the soul of Cynthia Symes, for her husband Archie, her daughters Joanna and Michelle and all her family. May God help them all to begin again.

Offer our own personal prayers – our deepest needs, our fears, our joys and thanksgivings and for all those who we love dearly.

A Prayer for Ukraine

God of strength and peace, send your blessing on the people of Ukraine. Sustain them in their struggles, hold them in their fear, protect them from all danger, and be for them the hope they desire.

(Composed by Andrew Nunn – Dean of Southwark)

Bishop of Southwark’s Lent Call Prayer 2022

Loving and saving God, we thank you that you have given us a home with you in heaven, help us work to enable others to feel at home in our communities. Give us your generosity of spirit that we might work with our neighbours to bring hope and peace to those around us. Amen.